



## Presenter Biographies

### Marty Guggenheim

One of the nation's foremost experts on children's rights and family law, Martin Guggenheim '71 has taught at NYU School of Law, where he now co-directs the Family Defense Clinic, since 1973. From 1998 to 2002, he was director of Clinical and Advocacy Programs. Guggenheim has been an active litigator in the area of children and the law and has argued leading cases on juvenile delinquency and termination of parental rights in the US Supreme Court. He is also a well-known scholar, having published more than 50 articles and book chapters, plus six books, including *What's Wrong with Children's Rights* (2005). His research has focused on adolescent abortion, First Amendment rights in schools, the role of counsel for children in court proceedings, and empirical research on child welfare practice, juvenile justice, and family law. As a student at NYU Law, he was an Arthur Garfield Hays Civil Liberties Scholar. Guggenheim is currently serving as an associate reporter for the American Law Institute's Restatement on Children and the Law.

### Hilary Kushins, JD, MSW, CWLS

Hilary Kushins, JD, MSW, CWLS, is the Drug Court and Training Programs Manager and co-founder of Dependency Advocacy Center, a non-profit legal services organization that represents indigent parents and some children in child abuse / neglect cases in Santa Clara County. She was a staff attorney at Dependency Legal Services for 6 years and a supervising attorney for 3 years. She is one of the primary attorneys representing parents in Dependency Wellness Court (Dependency Drug Court in Santa Clara County). She has been a faculty member of the National Drug Court Institute, providing training to other jurisdictions nationwide who wish to implement a dependency drug court. In 1998, she received a Juris Doctorate and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Maryland at Baltimore. Ms. Kushins is a Child Welfare Law Specialist, certified by the National Association of Counsel for Children.

### Mimi Laver

When Mimi came to the Center from Philadelphia in 1998, she brought with her 8 years representing the child welfare agency in court. That direct advocacy and a judicial clerkship gave Mimi a practical grounding in real-world issues for children and families. Her path at the Center has broadened to national advocacy, training, and policy work throughout the country. Her perspective has also shifted to champion rights of underserved child welfare system participants.

Charged with convening the first national steering committee on parent representation, Mimi put her agency attorney hat down to take up the cause for parents. That work has

led to national parent attorney representation standards, a Center-based [parent representation project](#), and a professional network for parent attorneys. Mimi's ability to see a need, take a different view, and get others to change their view have helped move the field forward. At the first parent attorney conference hosted by the ABA – one of her proudest moments – “there was so much energy and passion among people who are usually at the losing end of things,” recalls Mimi.

## **David Meyers**

David Meyers is an attorney who serves as Chief Operating Officer of Dependency Legal Services, a non-profit that holds contracts to represent parents and children in nine Northern California Counties. In addition, David serves as part time staff to the UC Davis Northern Training Academy, and runs the Law Office of David M. Meyers.

He has been working in the field of juvenile dependency law since 1995. David served for many years as a Senior Attorney with the Center for Families Children and the Courts where his primary responsibility included curriculum development and training facilitation for attorneys and court professionals engaged in juvenile dependency practice. David is licensed to practice law in California, Arizona and the Pascua Yaqui Nation.

Prior to joining CFCC, David was an Assistant Attorney General in Tucson representing their Child Protective Services Division. He worked for Sacramento Child Advocates, and for many years served as the supervising Attorney of Parent Advocates of Sacramento where he was responsible for the representation of indigent parents in child welfare cases.

He is currently a member of the American Bar Association's Parent Attorney Representation Project Steering Committee, where he works to advance attorney representation issues throughout the country. David holds a Bachelor's in Journalism and Music from the University of Florida and his JD from the University of Arizona. David is the former music critic for his hometown newspaper and plays piano in a Sacramento area club.

## **Darlene Montero**

Darlene Montero is a Mentor Parent with Dependency Advocacy Center (DAC) in Santa Clara County. As a Mentor Parent, Darlene works with mothers currently involved with the child welfare system – helping them in their addiction struggles and navigating the dependency system. Darlene herself was involved in the child welfare system due to her addiction to alcohol. She successfully participated in Dependency Drug Treatment Court. Given her hard work, she was able to reunify with her daughter and had her case closed. Darlene continues to be an active member of the recovery community. Additionally, she serves as a member of the Dependency Wellness Court

(DWC) Systems Committee, DWC Over-site Committee, and the California Parent Leadership Committee through Parents Anonymous Inc.

### **Denise Moore**

Ms. Moore's experience with substance abuse and the child welfare system led her a moment in time that inspired her to seek services and make the changes she needed to become clean so that she could return to her children. What she learned through that experience has motivated her through a variety of programs to assist and provide hope to parents who have been involved with the child welfare system.

Ms. Moore is employed with Children & Families of Iowa and providing coordination of the Parent Partner Program for 15 counties in central Iowa. She has been an integral piece of the development and implementation of a statewide program. She is a certified facilitator for Casey Family Programs Strategic Sharing Curriculum, a Master Trainer for Building a Better Future Curriculum, a Trainer for Breaking Barriers: Working more Effectively with Birth Parents (foster parent curriculum), a Family Team Facilitator, and a Youth Transition Decision-Making Team Facilitator for the State of Iowa. Ms. Moore has acquired her Bachelors of Science Degree in Human Services.

Ms. Moore is a Family Consultant with the Capacity Building Center for States, as well a member of Iowa Child Welfare Advisory Committee, Iowa Children's Justice Advisory Committee, Iowa Cultural Equity Alliance, Iowa Statewide Parent Partner Steering Committee, and a founding member of the Birth Parent National Network.

On January 20, 2011 she was awarded the Ruth Massinga /Casey Excellence for Children Birth Parent of the Year Award from Casey Family Programs for her exceptional service and commitment to birth parents. Ms. Moore has gained the admiration of parents, frontline workers and administrators alike as she helps to guide the child welfare system toward improved outcomes for children and families.

### **Brent Pattison**

Brent Pattison (B.A. Wesleyan University; J.D. University of Minnesota) is an Associate Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Middleton Children's Rights Center at Drake University Law School. Brent began his career as a Soros Justice Fellow at TeamChild, an award-winning program in Washington State that provides civil legal advocacy for children in the juvenile justice system. Brent has represented children in a wide variety of contexts, including delinquency, child welfare, housing, public benefits, and education cases. He is also a former special education teacher. He currently teaches the Children's Rights Clinic at Drake University Law School, supervising law students who represent children in abuse, neglect and delinquency proceedings. He also teaches Education Law.

## Vivek Sankaran

Vivek Sankaran, advocates for the rights of children and parents involved in child welfare proceedings. His work focuses on improving outcomes for children in foster care by empowering their parents and strengthening decision-making processes in juvenile courts. A clinical professor of law at the University of Michigan Law School, Professor Sankaran directs both the Child Advocacy Law Clinic and the Child Welfare Appellate Clinic, through which law students represent children and parents in trial and appellate proceedings. Professor Sankaran has written numerous articles focused on improving the child welfare system and has litigated cases before the Michigan Supreme Court. In addition, he conducts state and national trainings and works on child welfare initiatives with various national groups, including the American Bar Association, Casey Family Programs, and the National Center for State Courts.

After graduating from Michigan Law in 2001, Professor Sankaran received a Skadden Fellowship to represent children at The Children's Law Center in Washington, D.C., where he remained until 2005, when he joined the Law School faculty. In 2009, Professor Sankaran founded the Detroit Center for Family Advocacy, the first organization in the country to provide multidisciplinary legal assistance to families to prevent the unnecessary entry of children into foster care. In 2011, he was named Michigan's Parent Attorney of the Year. Most recently, Professor Sankaran co-edited both the first national book for family defense lawyers and the third edition of *Child Welfare Law and Practice*, a widely recognized resource used by child welfare lawyers across the country.